

CHRIST'S MARVELOUS GIVING NO. 3513

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 25, 1916
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 25, 1866

*“Who gave himself for us.”
Titus 2:14*

WE have once more, you see, the old subject. We still have to tell the story of the love of God towards man in the person of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. When you come to your table you find a variety there. Sometimes there is one dish upon it, and sometimes another, but you are never at all surprised to find the bread there every time, and perhaps, we might add that there would be a deficiency if there were not salt there every time too.

So there are certain truths which cannot be repeated too often, and especially is this true of this master truth, that “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” Why, this is the bread of life, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” This is the salt upon the table, and must never be forgotten, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief.”

Now we shall take the text, and use it thus, first of all *we shall ask it some questions*; then *we shall surround it with a setting of facts*, and when we have done that, *we will endeavor to press out of it its very soul as we draw certain inferences from it*. First then—

I. WE WILL PUT THE TEXT INTO THE WITNESS BOX AND ASK IT A FEW QUESTIONS.

There are only five words in the text, and we will be content to let it go with four questions. “Who gave himself for us.” The first question we ask the text is, *Who is this that is spoken of?* and the text gives the answer. It is “the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us.” We had offended God, the dignity of divine justice demanded that offenses against so good and just a law as that which God had promulgated should not be allowed to go unpunished.

But the attribute of justice is not the only one in the heart of God. God is love, and is, therefore, full of mercy. Yet, nevertheless, He never permits one quality of His Godhead to triumph over another. He could not be too merciful, and so become unjust, He would not permit mercy to put justice to an eclipse. The difficulty was solved thus, God Himself stooped from His loftiness and veiled His glory in a garb of our inferior clay.

The Word—that same Word without whom was not anything made that was made—became flesh and dwelt among us, and His apostles, His friends, and His enemies beheld Him—the seed of the woman, but yet the Son of God, very God of very God, in all the majesty of deity, and yet man of the substance of His mother in all the weakness of our humanity, sin being the only thing which separated us from Him, He being without sin, and we being full of it.

It is, then, *God*, who “gave Himself for us,” it is, then, *man*, who gave Himself for us. It is Jesus Christ, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, who made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. It is Christ Jesus, the man, the God, “who gave himself for us.”

Now I hope we shall not make any mistakes here, for mistakes here will be fatal. We may be thought uncharitable for saying it, but we should be dishonest if we did not say it, that it is essential to be right here—

***“Ye cannot be right in the rest,
Unless ye think rightly of Him.”***

You dishonor Christ if you do not believe in His deity. He will have nothing to do with you unless you accept Him as being God as well as man. You must receive Him as being, without any diminution, completely and wholly divine, and you must accept Him as being your brother, as being a man just as you are. This, this is the person, and relying upon Him, we shall find salvation, but rejecting His deity, He will say to us, “You knew me not, and I never knew you!”

The text has answered the question, “Who?” And now, putting it in the witness box again, we ask it another question—“What? What did He do?” The answer is, “He gave himself for us.” It was a gift. Christ’s offering of Himself for us was voluntary, He did it of His own will. He did not die because we merited that, He should love us to the death, on the contrary, we merited that He should hate us, we deserved that He should cast us from His presence as obnoxious things, for we were full of sin. We were the wicked keepers of the vineyard, who devoured for our own profit the fruit which belonged to the King’s Son, and He is that King’s Son, whom we slew with wicked hands casting Him out of the vineyard.

But He died for us who were His enemies. Remember the words of Scripture, “Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; peradventure, for a good, a generous man, one might even dare to die; but God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly.” He gave Himself. We cannot purchase the love of God.

This highest expression of divine love, the gift of His own Son, was, in the nature of things, unpurchaseable. What could we have offered that God should come into this world, and be found in fashion as a man, and should die? Why, the works of all the angels in heaven put together could not have deserved one pang from Christ.

If forever the angels had continued their ceaseless songs, and if all men had remained faithful, and could have heaped up their pile of merit to add to that of the angels, and if all the creatures that ever were, or ever shall be, could each bring in their golden heap of merit—yet could they ever deserve yon cross? Could they deserve that the Son of God should hang bleeding and dying there? Impossible! It must be a gift, for it was utterly unpurchaseable, though all worlds were coined and minted, yet could they not have purchased a tear from the Redeemer, they were not worth it. It must be grace, it cannot be merit, He gave Himself.

And the gift is so thoroughly a gift that no pressure of any kind was brought to bear upon the Savior. There was no necessity that He should die, except the necessity of His loving us. Ah! friends, we might have been blotted out of existence, and I do not know that there would have been any lack in God’s universe if the whole race of man had disappeared. That universe is too wide and great to miss such chirping grasshoppers as we are. When one star is blotted out it may make a little difference to our midnight sky, but to an eye that sees immensity it can make no change.

Know you not that this little solar system, which we think so vast, and those distant fixed stars, and yon mighty masses of nebulae, if such they be, and yonder streaming comet, with its stupendous walk of grandeur—all these are only like a little corner in the field of God’s great works? He takes them all up as nothing and considers them—mighty as they be, and beyond all human conception great—to be but the small dust of the balance which does not turn the scale, and if they were all gone tomorrow there would be no more loss than as if a few grains of dust were thrown to the summer’s wind.

But God Himself must stoop, rather than we should die! Oh! what magnificence of love! And the more so because there was no need for it. In the course of nature God would have been as holy and as heavenly without us as He is with us, and the pomp of yonder skies would have been as illustrious had

we been dashed into the flames of hell as it will be now. God has gained nought, except the manifestation of a love beyond an angel's dream, a grace, the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of which surpass all knowledge of all creatures. God only knows the love of God which is manifested in Jesus Christ. He gave Himself.

We will leave this point now, when it is fully understood that Christ's dying to save sinners, and giving Himself for the ungodly, was a pure act of gratuitous mercy. There was nothing to compel God to give His Son, and nothing to lead the Son to die, except the simple might of His love to men. He would not see us die. He had a Father's love to us. He seemed to stand over our fallen race, as David stood over Absalom, and we were as bad as Absalom, and there he stood, and said, "My son, my son! Would God I had died for thee, my son, my son!" But He did more than this, for He did die for us, and all for love of us who were His enemies!

*"So strange, so boundless was the love,
Which pitied dying man;
The Father sent His equal Son
To give them life again."*

'Twas all of love and of grace!

The third question is, "*What did He give?*" "Who gave *himself* for us," and here lies the glory of the text, that He gave not merely the crowns and royalties of heaven, though it was much to leave these, to come and don the humble garb of a carpenter's Son, not the songs of seraphs, not the shouts of cherubim, 'twas something to leave them to come and dwell amongst the groans and tears of this poor fallen world, not the grandeur of His Father's court, though it was much to leave that to come and live with wild beasts, and men more wild than they, to fast His forty days, and then to die in ignominy and shame upon the tree.

No, there is little said about all this. He gave all this, it is true, but He gave *Himself*. Mark, brethren, what a richness there is here! It is not that He gave His righteousness, though that has become our dress. It is not even that He gave His blood, though that is the fount in which we wash. It is that He gave Himself—His Godhead and manhood both combined. All that that word "Christ" means He gave to us and for us. He gave Himself.

Oh! that we could dive and plunge into this unfathomed sea—*Himself!* Omnipotence, Omniscience, Infinity—*Himself*. He gave *Himself*—purity, love, kindness, meekness, gentleness—that wonderful compound of all perfections, to make up one perfection—*Himself*.

You do not come to Christ's house and say, "He gives me this house, His church, to dwell in." You do not come to His table and merely say, "He gives me this table to feast at," but you go farther, and you take Him by faith into your arms, and you say, "Who loved me, and gave *Himself* for me."

Oh! that you could get hold of that sweet word—*Himself!* It is the love of a husband to his wife, who not only gives her all that she can wish, daily food and raiment, and all the comforts that can nourish and cherish her, and make her life glad, but who gives himself to her. So does Jesus. The body and soul of Jesus, the deity of Jesus, and all that that means, He has been pleased to give to and for His people. "Who gave himself for us."

There is another question which we shall ask the text, and that is, "*For whom did Christ give Himself?*" Well, the text says, "For *us*." There be those who say that Christ has thus given Himself for every man now living, or that ever did or shall live. We are not able to subscribe to the statement, though there is a truth in it, that in a certain sense He is "the Savior of all men," but then it is added, "Specially of them that believe."

At any rate, dear hearer, let me tell you one thing that is certain. Whether atonement may be said to be particular or general, there are none who partake in its real efficacy but certain characters, and those characters are known by certain infallible signs. You must not say that He gave Himself for you unless

these signs are manifest in you, and the first sign is that of simple faith in the Lord Jesus. If you believe in Him, that shall be a proof to you that He gave Himself for you.

See, if He gave Himself for all men alike, then He did equally for Judas and for Peter. Care you for such love as that? He died equally for those who were then in hell as for those who were then in heaven? Care you for such a doctrine as that? For my part, I desire to have a personal, peculiar, and special interest in the precious blood of Jesus, such an interest in it as shall lead me to His right hand, and enable me to say, "He hath washed me from my sins, in his blood."

Now I think we have no right to conclude that we shall have any benefit from the death of Christ unless we trust Him, and if we do trust Him, that trust will produce the following things—"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity"—we shall hate sin, we shall fight against it, we shall be delivered from it—"and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works."

I have no right, therefore, to conclude that I shall be a partaker of the precious blood of Jesus unless I become in my life "zealous of good works," My good works cannot save me, cannot even help to save me, but they are evidences of my being saved, and if I am not zealous for good works, I lack the evidence of salvation, and I have no right whatever to conclude that I shall receive one jot of benefit from Christ's sufferings upon the tree.

Oh! my dear hearer, I would to God that you could trust the Man, the God who died on Calvary! I would that you could trust Him so that you could say, "He will save me, He has saved me." The gratitude which you would feel towards Him would inspire you with an invincible hatred against sin. You would begin to fight against every evil way, you would conform yourselves, by His grace, to His law and His Word, and you would become a new creature in Him! May God grant that you may yet be able to say, "Who gave himself for me"! I have asked the text enough questions, and there I leave them. For a few minutes only I am now going to use the text another way, namely—

II. PUT THE TEXT INTO A SETTING OF FACTS.

There was a day before all days when there was no day but the Ancient of Days, a time when there was no time, but when Eternity was all. Then God, in the eternal purpose, decreed to save His people. If we may speak so of things too mysterious for us to know them, and which we can only set forth after the manner of men, God had determined that His people should be saved, but He foresaw that they would sin. It was necessary, therefore, that the penalty due to their sins should be borne by someone. They could not be saved unless a substitute were found who would bear the penalty of sin in their place and stead.

Where was such a substitute to be found? No angel offered. There was no angel, for God dwelt alone, and even if there had then been angels, they could never have dared to offer to sustain the fearful weight of human guilt. But in that solemn council chamber, when it was deliberated who should enter into bonds of suretyship to pay all the debts of the people of God, Christ came and gave Himself a bondsman and a surety for all that was due from them, or would be due from them, to the judgment seat of God. In that day, then, He "gave himself for us."

But Time began, and this round world had made, in the mind of God, a few revolutions. Men said the world was getting old, but to God it was but an infant. But the fullness of time was come, and suddenly, amidst the darkness of the night, there was heard sweeter singing than before had come from mortal lips, "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace; good will to men!" What lit up the sky with unwonted splendor, and what had filled the air with *chorales* at the dead of night?

See the Babe upon its mother's breast, there in Bethlehem's manger! "He gave himself for us." That same one who had given Himself a surety has come down to earth to be a man, and to give Himself for us. See Him! For thirty years He toils on, amidst the drudgery of the carpenter's shop! What is He doing? The law needed to be fulfilled, and He "gave himself for us," and fulfilled the law. But now the time comes when He is thirty-two or thirty-three years of age, and the law demands that the penalty shall be paid.

Do you see Him going to meet Judas in the garden, with confident, but solemn step? He "gave himself for us." He could with a word have driven those soldiers into hell, but they bind Him—He "gave himself for us." They take Him before Pilate, and Herod, and Caiaphas, and they mock Him, and jeer Him, and pluck His cheeks, and flagellate His shoulders! How is it that He will smart at this rate? How is it that He bears so passively all the insults and indignities which they heap upon Him? He gave Himself for us. Our sins demanded smart, He bared His back and took the smart, He gave Himself for us. But do you see that dreadful procession going through the streets of Jerusalem, along the rough pavement of the *Via Dolorosa*?

Do you see the weeping women as they mourn because of Him? How is it that He is willing to be led a captive up to the hill of Calvary? Alas! they throw Him on the ground! They drive accursed iron through His hands and feet. They hoist Him into the air! They dash the cross into its appointed place, and there He hangs, a naked spectacle of scorn and shame, derided of men, and mourned by angels. How is it that the Lord of glory, who made all worlds, and hung out the stars like lamps, should now be bleeding and dying there? "He gave himself for us."

Can you see the streaming fountains of the four wounds in His hands and feet? Can you trace His agony as it carves lines upon His brow and all down His emaciated frame? No you cannot see the griefs of His soul. No spirit can behold them. They were too terrible for you to know them. It seemed as though all hell were emptied into the bosom of the Son of God, and as though all the miseries of all the ages were made to meet upon Him, till He bore—

*"All that incarnate God could bear,
With strength enough, but none to spare."*

Now why is all this but that He gave Himself for us till His head hung down in death, and His arms, in chill, cold death, hung down by His side, and they buried the lifeless Victor in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. "He gave himself for us!"

What more now remains? He lives again, on the third day He comes from the tomb, and even then, He still gave Himself for us! Oh! yes, beloved, He has gone up on high, but He still gives Himself for us, for up there He is constantly engaged in pleading the sinner's cause. Up yonder, amidst the glories of heaven, He has not forgotten us poor sinners who are here below, but He spreads His hands, and pleads before His Father's throne, and wins for us unnumbered blessings, for He gave Himself for us.

And I have been thinking whether I might not use the text in another way. Christ's servants wanted a subject upon which to preach, and so He "gave himself for us," to be the constant topic of our ministry. Christ's servants needed a sweet companion to be with them in their troubles, and He gave Himself for us. Christ's people want comfort, they need spiritual food and drink, and so He gave Himself for us—His flesh to be our spiritual meat, and His blood to be our spiritual drink.

And we expect soon to go home to the land of the hereafter, to the realms of the blessed, and what is to be our heaven? Why, our heaven will be Christ Himself, for He gave Himself for us. Oh! He is all that we want, all that we wish for! We cannot desire anything greater and better than to be with Christ, and to have Christ, to feed upon Christ, to lie in Christ's bosom, to know the kisses of His mouth, to look at the gleamings of His loving eyes, to hear His loving words, to feel Him press us to His heart, and tell us that He has loved us from before the foundation of the world, and given Himself for us.

I think we have put the text now into a setting of certain facts, do not forget them, but let them be your joy! And now the last thing we have to do is to—

III. TURN THE TEXT TO PRACTICAL ACCOUNT BY DRAWING FROM IT A FEW INFERENCES.

The first inference I draw is this—that *He who gave Himself for His people will not deny them anything*. This is a sweet encouragement to you who practice the art of prayer. You know how Paul puts it, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not, with him, also

freely give us all things?" Christ is all. If Christ gives Himself to you, He will give you your bread and your water, and He will give you a house to dwell in. If He gives you Himself, He will not let you starve on the road to heaven. Jesus Christ does not give us Himself and then deny us common things. Oh! child of God, go boldly to the throne of grace! You have got the major, you shall certainly have the minor, you have the greater, you cannot be denied the less.

Now I draw another inference, namely, that if Christ has already given Himself in so painful a way as I have described, since there is no need that He should suffer anymore, *we must believe that He is willing to give Himself now unto the hearts of poor sinners.*

Beloved, for Christ to come to Bethlehem is a greater stoop than for Him to come into your heart. Had Christ to die upon Calvary? That is all done, and He need not die again. Do you think that He who is willing to die is unwilling to apply the results of His passion? If a man leaps into the water to bring out a drowning child, after he has brought the child alive on shore, if he happens to have a piece of bread in his pocket, and the child needs it, do you think that he who rescued the child's life will deny that child so small a thing as a piece of bread?

And come, do you think that Christ died on Calvary, and yet will not come into your heart if you seek Him? Do you believe that He who died for sinners will ever reject the prayer of a sinner? If you believe that you think harshly of Him, for His heart is very tender. He feels even a cry. You know how it is with your children, if they cry through pain, why, you would give anything for someone to come and heal them, and if you cry because your sin is painful, the great Physician will come and heal you.

Ah! Jesus Christ is much more easily moved by our cries and tears than we are by the cries of our fellow creatures. Come, poor sinner, come and put your trust in my Master! You cannot think Him hard-hearted. If He were, why did He die? Do you think Him unkind? Then why did He bleed? You are inclined to think so hardly of Him! You are making great cuts at His heart when you think Him to be untender and ungenerous.

"As I live, saith the LORD, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but rather that he would turn unto me and live." This is the voice of the God whom you look upon as so sternly just! Did Jesus Christ, the tender one, speak in even more plaintive tones, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"? You working men, you laboring men, Christ bids you come to Him! "All ye that labour." And you who are unhappy, you who know you have done wrong, and cannot sleep at nights because of it, you who are troubled about sin, and would fain go and hide your heads, and get—

"Anywhere, anywhere out of the world,"

—your Father says to you one and all, "Run not from Me, but come to Me, My child!" Jesus, who died, says, "Flee not from Me, but come to Me, for I will accept you, I will receive you, I cast out none that come unto Me." Sinner, Jesus never did reject a coming soul yet, and He never will. Oh! try Him! Try Him! Now come, with your sins about you just as you are, to the bleeding, dying Savior, and He will say to you, "I have blotted out thy sins; go and sin no more; I have forgiven thee." May God grant you grace to put your trust in Him "who gave himself for us"!

There are many other inferences which I might draw if I had time, but if this last one we have drawn to be so applied to your hearts as to be carried out, it will be enough. Now do not you go and try to do good works in order to merit heaven. Do not go and try to pray yourselves into heaven by the efficacy of praying. Remember, He "gave himself for us." The old proverb is that "there is nothing freer than a gift," and surely this gift of God, this eternal life, must be free, and we must have it freely, or not at all.

I sometimes see put up at some of our doctors that they receive "gratis patients." That is the sort of patients my Master receives. He receives none but those who come gratis. He never did receive anything yet, and He never will, except your love and your thanks after He has saved you. But you must come to Him empty-handed, come just as you are, and He will receive you now, and you shall live to sing to the

praise and the glory of His grace who has accepted you in the Beloved, and “who gave himself for us.” God help you to do it. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 45:1-14

It is a psalm of instruction, and yet it is a song of love, for the science of love to Christ is the most excellent of all the sciences. To know Christ is to love Him, and we are best instructed who love Him most, and the psalm is most of all a Maschil, a psalm of instruction, when we are taught to love. Hence the psalm is a song of love.

Verse 1. *My heart is inditing a good matter:*

A good instrument—the heart refined and sanctified—a good subject, for, says he—

1. *I speak of the things which I have made touching the king:*

Oh! it is a loyal subject concerning King Jesus. The original has it, “My heart boileth up with a good matter”—bubbleth up—as if each verse of this psalm were, so to speak, the bubbling up of a boiling heart that is heated with the love of Christ, and all is concerning Him—concerning Him the King. “I speak of the things which I have made.” That is experience—things I made on my own, and there is no matter like that. Theoretical theology is of little value. We must have it in the heart and have it in our own.

1. *My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.*

As though it were moved by another hand, as a pen might be. So the psalmist feels as if his tongue were under divine influence, and he were about to utter things his own, yet not his own—things which he has made, yet which the Spirit indicts.

2. *Thou art fairer than the children of men:*

And then he sees Him. He sees Him by faith, and he speaks, not so much about him, as to Him. “Thou art fairer than the children of men.” Oh! it is sweet meditating upon Christ, when Christ Himself is present. It is blessed work to speak about Christ when you can speak to Christ at the same time. Thou art fairer than the children of men—the very fairest of them. Whatever beauty, excellence, and worth there may be about mankind, Thou hast all, and more than all that they possess.

2. *Grace is poured into thy lips:*

It comes, therefore, pouring from them. It comes welling up from Thy mouth. Every word that Thou speakest is full of grace and truth.

2. *Therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.*

The Mediator, the God-man, Christ Jesus, is blessed of God. The blessing of the Most High rests upon Him because He is so infinitely lovely. His words are unspeakably gracious, and if God blesses Him, shall not we bless Him? If God Himself praises Him, shall not we praise Him? Oh! let us not be silent, but where God leads the way, let us joyfully follow.

3. *Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.*

He loves the fighting Christ—Christ with the sword on His thigh. Oh! but it is sweet to see the Prince of peace—to know that He comes to our heart bearing unspeakably precious blessings, but yet the terrible side of Christ is precious to His saints. They ask Him to gird His sword upon His thigh. An armed Christ can only be armed for the defense of His people, and for the deliverance of them from captivity. Therefore, O you loveliest of the lovely, be the mightiest of the mighty too.

4. *And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.*

There are three things that are much put to it in this world, and have a hard time of it, truth, which is beset with error, like the hunted hind pursued by dogs. O God, defend Thy truth! O Christ of God, lay upon Your sword to smite down error!

The next thing is meekness. A gentle spirit has a hard time of it among the hard-hearted sons of men. They do not understand meekness. They call the meek man a milksop. They make mirth out of his gentleness. O sword of the Lord, defend the meek ones of the earth!

And there is a third thing that has a hard time of it, and that is righteousness amongst a godless generation, that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter—darkness for light, and light for darkness. Righteousness has to run the gauntlet. But O You who are truth, and meekness, and righteousness embodied, come forth with Your sharp sword, and fight on the behalf of these things! We do not ask the Lord to come into the world for the sake of pomp, and pride, and power. We only want His battles to be battles of love. We only ask Him to extend the kingdom of truth, and meekness, and righteousness.

5. *Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies: whereby the people fall under thee.*

Christ has far-reaching power. He can not only smite with the sword, but He has skill with the bow, and He can dart an arrow to those that are far off, that they may feel His power. Oh! that He would do so now, that those who are leagues away from Him may, to their own surprise, find a shaft come right into their heart, that they may fall under the power of Christ, and cry out to Him to come and heal the wound that His own arrow has made. He will do it, for it is written, “I wound, and I heal,” and wherever Christ wounds in mercy, He heals in mercy too.

6. *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter.*

Notice that the more you look at Christ the more there is to see. Here the songster first said, “Thou art fairer than the children of men,” and now he cries, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” That man has not seen much of Christ who has not perceived Him to be God—God on the throne, God on an everlasting throne.

Oh! if any of you have not yet believed in Christ as God, I pray you may do so, for you do not know the Christ of the Scriptures at all, however much you may value His moral character as supreme in wisdom, unless you can say, “My Lord and My God,” as Thomas did when he saw His wounds. “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever. The scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter.” There is the joy of it! Christ has absolute sovereignty, but that absolute sovereignty never goes beyond the realm of right. “The scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter.”

7. *Thou love righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*

Christ is no neutral. He loves righteousness, and hates wickedness. He is like fire in all that He does. There is about Him a certain strength of heart, both to love and to hate, and it is for this reason that God loves Him, for God hates lukewarmness. “So then, because thou art neither cold nor hot,” says He, “I will spue thee out of my mouth.” But Christ is never neutral about these matters. He loves righteousness. He hates wickedness. “Therefore, God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.”

And if you want to have the oil of gladness, dear friends, you must not be neutral. You that live betwixt and between—that are neither very good nor very bad—that are not decided worldlings, nor yet decided Christians, you never have any joy at all. You see, you do not go enough into the world to get its joy, bad and base as it is, and you do not go enough into Christ’s kingdom to get its joy, so you get no comfort either way. Oh! to be cast into the kingdom altogether—thrown into it as a man into the deep sea, and swallowed up in it! In its lowest depths are the sweetest waters.

8. *All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.*

The very clothes of Christ are precious to believers. “Unto you that believe, he is preciousness.” But even His very garments are savored with it, whether He puts on His priestly robes, or His royal garniture, or His prophetic mantle. Each one of these has in it a sweet savor of all manner of choice perfumes, myrrh, and aloes, and cassia. Bitter sweets all of them! Oh! in Christ there is a wonderful bitter sweetness—the pangs of death that breed our life, the pangs of sorrow that bring us joy, His down-casting for our uplifting.

9. Kings' daughters were among thy honorable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.

No one is so honored as the one who waits upon the Savior. They are honorable women that minister to Him of their substance, that are often found in His temple, like Anna of old. These are kings' daughters, every one of them. And as for His church as a whole, she is a queen. She takes no low mean rank, and her apparel is like her dignity. She is clothed in the gold of Ophir—the best of metals, and the best kind of that metal—the gold of Ophir, and “strangely, my soul, art thou arrayed by the great Sacred Three.” All manner of royal apparel is put upon the church of God, and upon every member of it.

10. Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;

We cannot know Christ thoroughly unless we leave off knowing the world. There must be a forgetting as well as a remembering. We are to forget our father's house—come right out from it. If Christ is to love His church, it must be a nonconforming church in the deepest sense of that word. I mean not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of its mind. Not only are we not to love the world, but we are not to think of it. “Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house.”

11. So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty:

We were thinking of His beauty. But see, when once we see the beauty of Christ, Christ puts a beauty upon us, and when we learn the beauties of Christ, we soon see beauties in His church. I find that those who rail at the church of God have not a very high esteem of the church's Head, but when He is beloved, His people are beloved for His sake. Why, there is an old proverb that says, “Love me, love my dog.” Much more may we say, “Love Christ, love His church.”

11. For he is thy Lord; worship thou him.

This is the great business of the church—to carry on the worship of her Lord, and I believe that, met together as we are tonight, we are met for the noblest purpose under heaven. When the people of God come together for worship, they are doing that which angels do before the throne—an occupation from which they never cease day or night!

12. And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift;

Well, but she is a heathen, she is a trafficker. What does she know about the King of Israel? Ah! but when Israel owns her King—when the church of Christ delights in Christ, and dotes upon Him, she shall have converts in plenty, from the least likely places.

12. Even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour.

They are generally taken up with other things, but then they shall know, when once the church is right with her King.

13. The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold.

Who has wrought it but her King, whose own right hand has hammered out the precious fabric, and then has taken every golden thread, and with His own bleeding hand, has wrought it into a sacred vesture that shall outlast the stars, “Her clothing is of wrought gold.”

14. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins, her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.

Happy are those pure virgin spirits that hardly dare think themselves fit to be called a part of the bride, but yet follow her and keep close to her. They are really a part of her, and they “shall be brought unto thee.”